NBM Comics Lit

#3
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CORTO MALTESE

BALLAD OF THE SALT SEA

HUGO PRATT

SUMMARY

Shipwrecked and scattered all over an island, Pandora, Cain and Corto try to regroup. Afraid and angry, Pandora shoots Corto. Eventually they all end up prisoners of a tribe of cannibals. But Cranio has managed to fool them and taken over as the witch doctor. His plan for their escape succeeds and they are back at sea once again, encountering Rasputin in a submarine. They reach the mysterious island of "Escondida" where the king of the seas, "the monk", resides...

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Translation by Ian Monk
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SEAMAIL

Welcome to Corto's mailbag! First off some exciting news! There is a Corto Maltese movie in production! It will start filming beginning next year and will star Christopher Lambert. A good choice if you ask me as he does have a moody severe-looking stare from behind a dramatic brow. You would have seen that especially in Lord Greystoke, the latest Tarzan movie he was in. What do you think? As I get more news about it, I'll pass it on. On to the mail:

"I just picked up the first installment of *The Ballad of the Salt Sea*. I'd like to express my thanks, and gratitude that finally you are publishing more Corto in English. I've read all the graphic novels you have in print, and I've been dying to see more." Herb Ascherman, New York.

"Very glad to see NBM publishing Corto Maltese as a comic book. Though I am normally displeased that comics seem so tied to the periodical format (I'd prefer more serious works to appear as "trade paperbacks" or albums in the States), this presentation gives me an opportunity to see if I can get into Corto's adventures without forcing me to "make the leap" and buy some of the more expensive collected volumes. Thanks for that, then."

"There are two things conspicuously lacking in my copy of *Ballad of the Salt Sea #2*, however, either on the cover or ANY of the interior pages. Those things would be the words "Hugo" and "Pratt"."

"For shame. I thought NBM was about comics as a literary form? How can you promote that concept by pumping out reprint volumes of "authorless" work like so much "product"? I assume it was an oversight, but a very unfortunate one if you ask me." Neil McAllister, San Francisco.

Ed.: After the price, another silly oversight on our part! We take Pratt's name so much for granted on Corto...Apologies to everyone and to his memory... We'll get this comic book publishing business straight some day (grumblmumbl).

"At last! *Ballad of the Salt Sea* in English. As a persistent Hugo Pratt fan I've collected his stuff in several European publications. My hardcover "Ballad" is Italian and I'm no better in it than French or German so the Casterman books were greatly appreciated. The same for this comic book series you are now bringing out. So far as I know, this was Pratt's introduction of Corto Maltese. It is also an interesting item in that its 163 pages see Pratt's style shift from his previous Caniff inspired look to the leaner look which he is more recognized for. He has continued to refine his art with every book he has drawn since. I am looking forward to going thru the experience again, only this time reading the story Pratt wrote rather than the one I intuited."

"Is there indeed some hope that the Corto books following *Fable of Venice* may see print? Pratt's work has gripped my interest from the first I ever laid eyes on it and after more than 20 years I'm as fascinated as ever." George Metzger, Vancouver.

"I was in Padua in January 1991. My girlfriend, who I was travelling with, had gone off to Bulgaria for a few days. I was in a strange town, with snow underfoot, and was locked out of my hostel everyday. It was tough to find ways of keeping amused, and warm, on the budget I had."

"I decided it was time to do what I could in looking for Italian comics, and Italian comic book stores. This had been a great success in Paris, where I had discovered what still rank as my favorite comic book stores in the world. The ones I found in Padua were not as sophisticated, or as well stocked, but apart from the ubiquitous Dylan Dog, I also found back issues of a quite substantial magazine, an anthology of many Italian, and some obviously translated from French, or English, strips. There was work by Vittorio Giardino (I'd seen his work in translation, in album format, in Australia). But also, particularly, another guy. Black and white work that looked like a cross between Milton Caniff and Quentin Blake, the children's book illustrator. But also another strip of his, further back in the book, in what looked to be an earlier, more hatched style, but this was coloured in pale watercolours. From what I could piece together with my faulty Italian, this strip was from 16 years earlier, and it featured the debut of a character whose name, eponymously enough, was also the title of the magazine itself. So I met Corto Maltese. So I stumbled through *La Ballata Della Mare Salata* (I think)"

"Six years later, I get to read: "I am the Pacific Ocean and I am the largest". Of course, in the interim, I've bought all those albums you've brought out in translation (for which relief much thanks) but it's a real treat to be reading this, the first Corto Maltese story, in English for the first time. And to that last panel...all the panels..."

"Best of luck with this, Terry. It can't be easy, in a market of image lovers and distribution craziness, but you're very much doing a great thing, in terms of getting the work of a master out there. O'course, I do hope you make a mint doing it. What are your plans with the comic book?" Bernard Caleo, Melbourne.

Ed.: We plan on continuing this comic book as long as it works. After the Ballad, *we'll go on to* The Golden House of Samarkand! *So spread the word around about these great Corto comics, that way we can keep bringing'em to you!*

Write your comments to: NBM- Corto, Terry Nantier, 185 Madison Ave., Ste. 1504, New York, NY 10016
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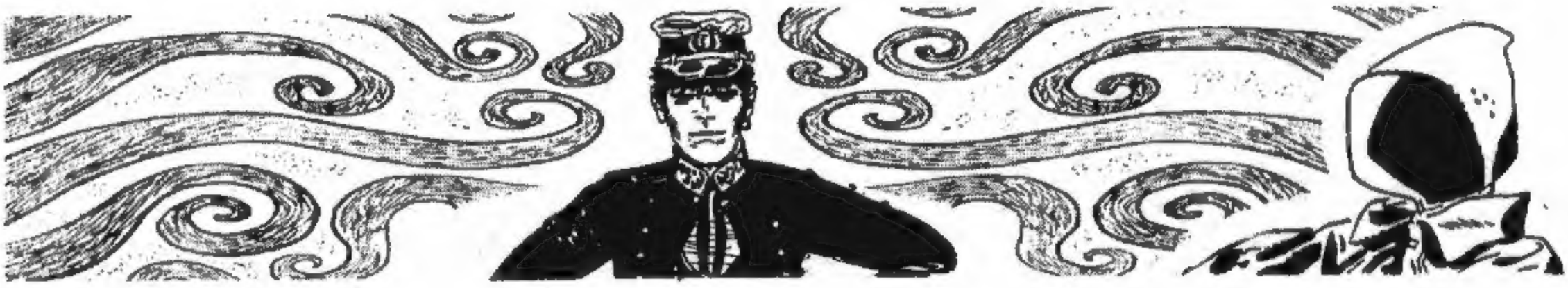
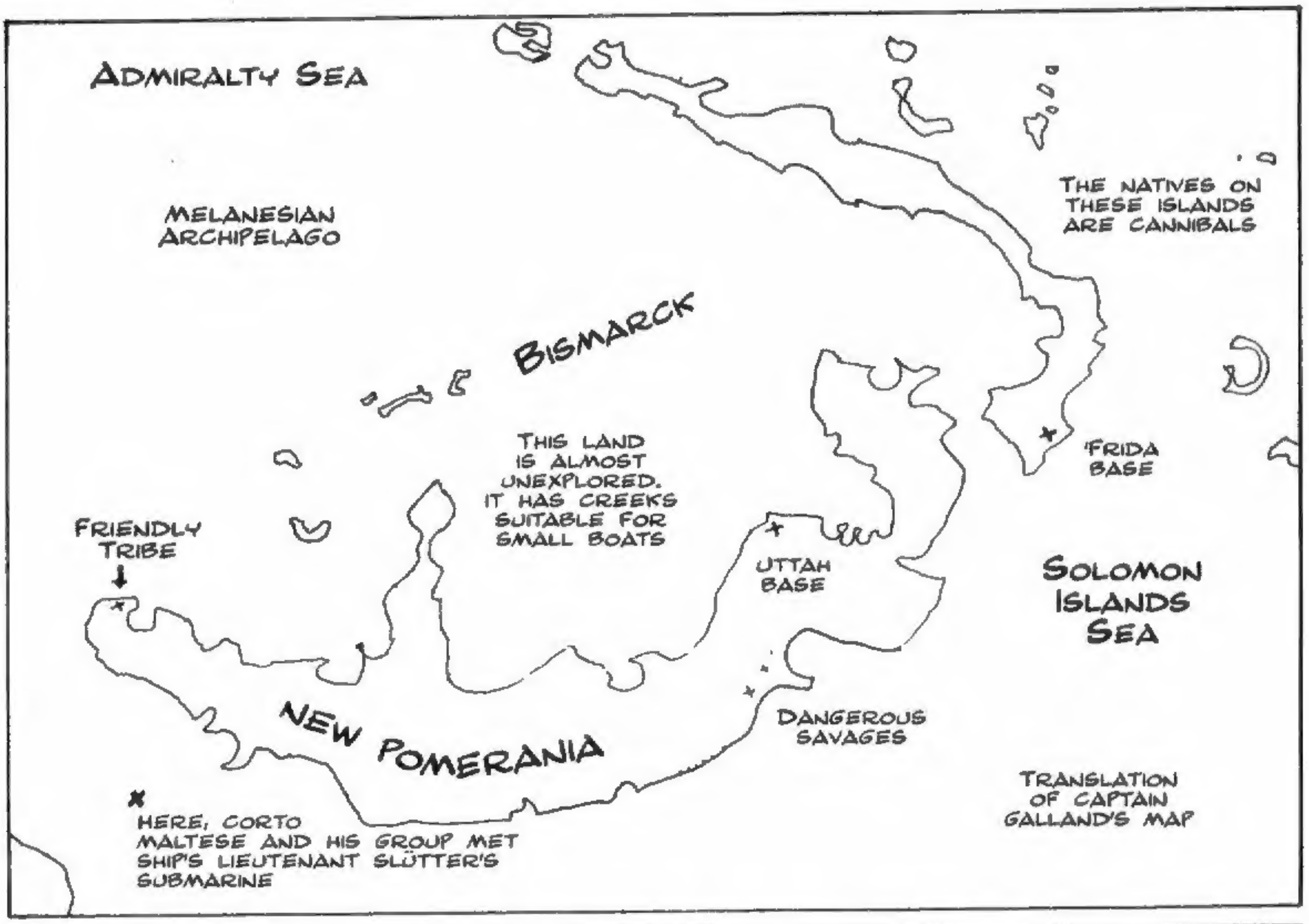



ADMIRALTY SEA
MELANESIAN ARCHIPELAGO
THE NATIVES ON THESE ISLANDS ARE CANNIBALS
BISMARCK
THIS LAND IS ALMOST UNEXPLORED. IT HAS CREEKS SUITABLE FOR SMALL BOATS
FRIENDLY TRIBE
UTTAH BASE
FRIDA BASE
SOLOMON ISLANDS SEA
NEW POMERANIA
DANGEROUS SAVAGES
TRANSLATION OF CAPTAIN GALLAND'S MAP
HERE, CORTO MALTESE AND HIS GROUP MET SHIP'S LIEUTENANT SLÜTTER'S SUBMARINE

CALL UP MR MALTESE!

YOU ASKED FOR ME, MR SLÜTTER?
THAT'S RIGHT, MR CORTO MALTESE. THIS IS AN AWKWARD BUSINESS. I SUPPOSE YOU KNOW HOW WAR SHIPS ARE RUN, DON'T YOU?
WAIT A SECOND... AREN'T YOU BIG ENOUGH TO TELL HIM YOURSELF?
I AM, BUT ALL THE SAME...

I'M TALKING ABOUT THE GIRL... COULD YOU TELL MR RASPUTIN TO LEAVE HER ALONE?
I SUPPOSE I DO...

I WANTED TO AVOID ANY TROUBLE. HOW DID YOU END UP TRAVELLING WITH THESE YOUNGSTERS?

ACH! SO YOU WANT TO BE DIFFICULT, DO YOU? THEN I'LL ASK THEM WHAT THEY'RE DOING HERE MYSELF!

I DON'T LIKE YOUR TONE OF VOICE, MR SLÜTTER.

OH WELL, MR SLÜTTER, THERE'S NO BIG MYSTERY ABOUT THAT. THE BOY AND THE GIRL ARE BOTH HEIRS TO A SWISS BANK AND TO AN ANGLO-AMERICAN SHIPPING COMPANY. WE PICKED THEM UP WHEN THEY WERE ADRIFT IN A LIFEBOAT AND TOOK THEM ON BOARD.

AND THAT'S IT? WELL, MR CORTO MALTESE, THAT ALL SOUNDS TOO SIMPLE TO ME. THANK YOU FOR THE INFORMATION ANYWAY, AND... GOOD NIGHT!

WELL, WE'RE IN SAFE HANDS FOR THE MOMENT, AND THAT'S ALL THAT MATTERS.

EVERY STEP WE TAKE TAKES US FURTHER AWAY FROM HELP. HOW EVER IS THIS STORY GOING TO END?

THAT LIEUTENANT SLÜTTER LOOKS REASSURING. I THINK WE'RE SAFE ENOUGH WITH HIM.

KNOCK! KNOCK! KNOCK!

I WONDER ABOUT THAT. HE'S AN OFFICER WHO'S ON THE WAR PATH!

KNOCK!

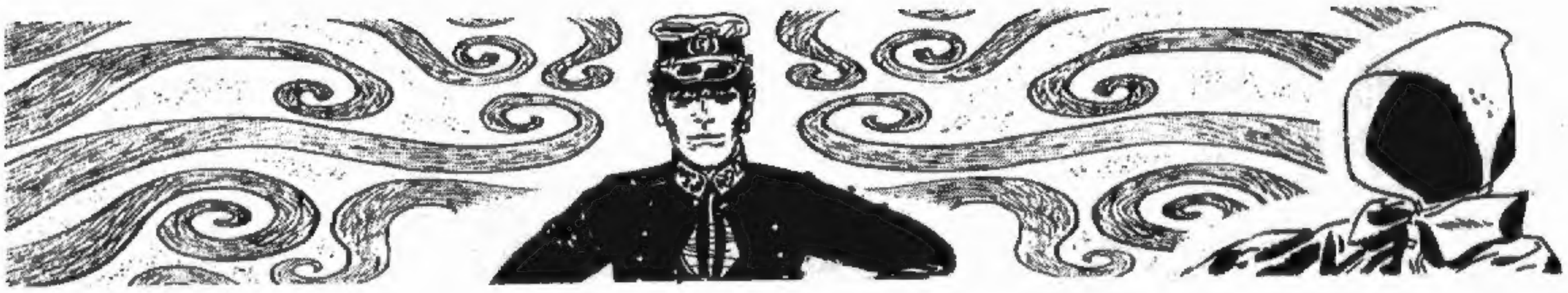
GOOD EVENING, COMMANDER. TO WHAT DO WE OWE THIS PLEASURE?

I'M SORRY TO DISTURB YOU. BUT I HAVE ONE OR TWO QUESTIONS TO ASK YOU, IF YOU DON'T MIND. I KNOW THAT YOU'RE ENGLISH.

I'M ENGLISH. BUT PANDORA'S AN AMERICAN CITIZEN.

AH, I SEE. BUT WHY DIDN'T YOU COME TO SEE US WHEN YOU WERE ON THE KAISERINE FLUSS?

UNLESS, THAT IS, YOU WERE PRISONERS?



ALL RIGHT, LIEUTENANT SLÜTTER, I'LL TELL YOU OUR LITTLE STORY...

... AND THAT'S WHY, WHEN WE GOT TO THE KAISERINE FLUSS, CORTO MALTESE TOOK US UPSTREAM SO THAT THE GERMANS WOULDN'T SPOT US!
DAMN THAT BRAT! HE'S TOLD HIM THE WHOLE STORY!

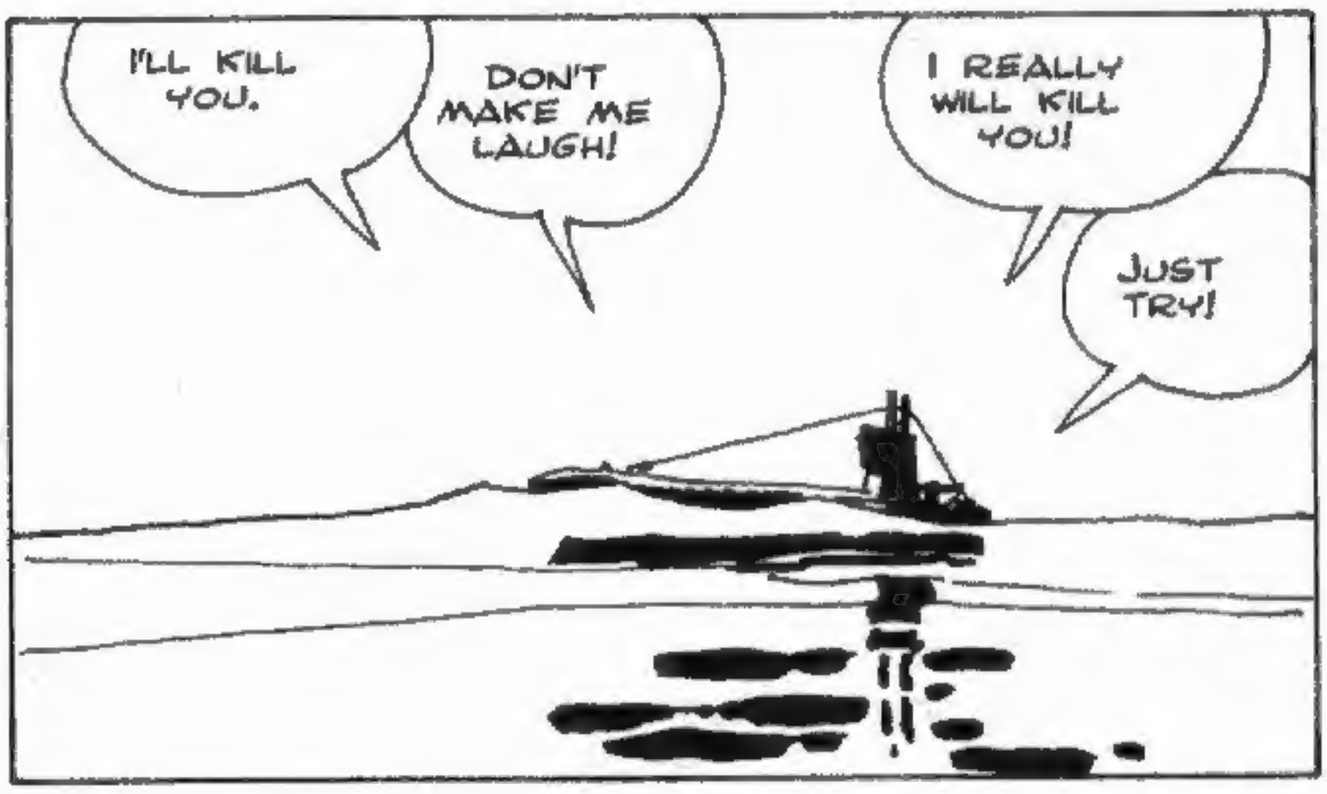
IF I BURST IN AND KILLED THEM BOTH, I COULD TAKE COMMAND OF THE SUBMARINE...

RASPUTIN, WHAT ARE YOU PLAYING AT?

ARE YOU SPYING ON ME, MALTESE?
WHO, ME? COURSE I'M NOT, RAS! WE'RE FRIENDS, AREN'T WE?

ARE YOU ANGRY?
PUSH OFF, CORTO, OR ELSE...

OR ELSE, WHAT?


I'LL KILL YOU.
DON'T MAKE ME LAUGH!
I REALLY WILL KILL YOU!
JUST TRY!

I DON'T WANT YOU TO MESS THINGS UP! THERE'S TOO MUCH AT STAKE FOR YOU TO FOUL UP AGAIN NOW!

WHAT THE HELL DIFFERENCE DOES THAT MAKE?

WELL, WHAT DO YOU WANT?

BUT THE BOY'S TOLD SLÜTTER EVERYTHING!

DO YOU THINK SLÜTTER WILL IGNORE THE ORDERS HE'S BEEN GIVEN JUST BECAUSE WE'VE GOT TWO YOUNG ENGLISH PRISONERS ON BOARD? THE "MONK" WILL SORT EVERY-THING OUT. IS THAT CLEAR?

WHAT'S CLEAR FOR YOU ALWAYS SOUNDS OBSCURE TO ME, MALTESE. BUT YOU MAY BE RIGHT.

OF COURSE I AM. YOU'RE SO STUPID THAT BEING RIGHTER THAN YOU ISN'T HARD. THE GERMANS HAVE OTHER THINGS ON THEIR MINDS THAN PLAYING NANNY TO A COUPLE OF CHILDREN. AND SLÜTTER WOULD NEVER FAIL IN HIS DUTY.

BUT WHAT ABOUT YOU, CORTO MAL-TESE, WHAT'S YOUR OPINION OF ME?

MY OPINION OF YOU? WHATEVER HAS THAT GOT TO DO WITH IT?

MAMMA MIA... I NEED A DRINK.

I'M JUST CURIOUS, THAT'S ALL.

SO YOU WON'T ANSWER ME!

OH! WHAT'S THE POINT OF ALL THESE QUESTIONS?

I WANT TO HAVE FRIENDS, AND YET I NEVER MAKE ANY. AM I DIFFERENT FROM OTHER PEOPLE?

YES... I MEAN, NO YOU'RE NOT... OH, I DON'T KNOW...

THERE, YOU SEE, YOU'RE ATTACKING ME AGAIN, AND ALL I'M ASKING FOR IS FRIENDSHIP.

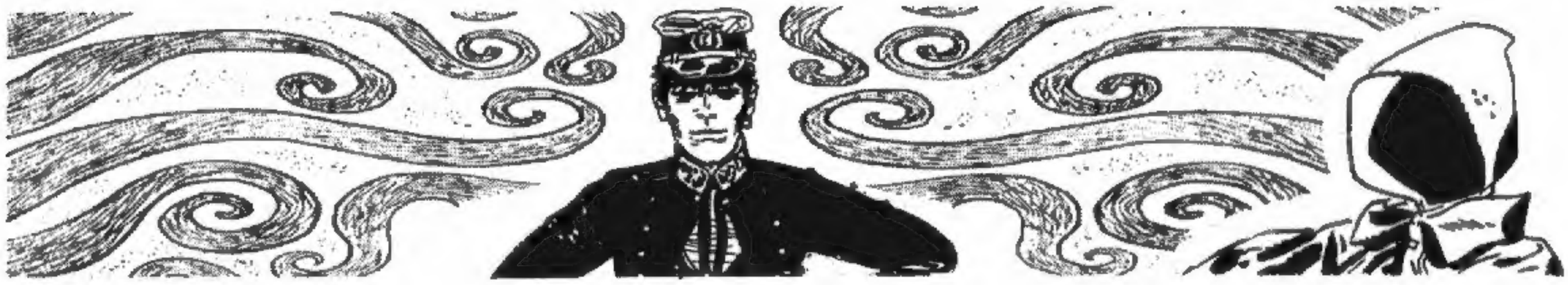
STOP BOTHERING ME, RASPUTIN. I'M SORRY, BUT YOU'RE STARK STARING MAD!

WHAT'S GOING ON? ARE THEY ARGUING?

I DON'T KNOW... IT'S CORTO MALTESE AND RASPUTIN.

DON'T WORRY, CHILDREN. FROM NOW ON, YOU'RE UNDER MY PROTECTION.

THANK YOU, MR SLÜTTER, GOODBYE.



YOU SEE? I SET ONE OF THEM AGAINST THE OTHER. NOW WE CAN TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE SITUATION.
ACCORDING TO YOU, YES!
Uh...
Uh...

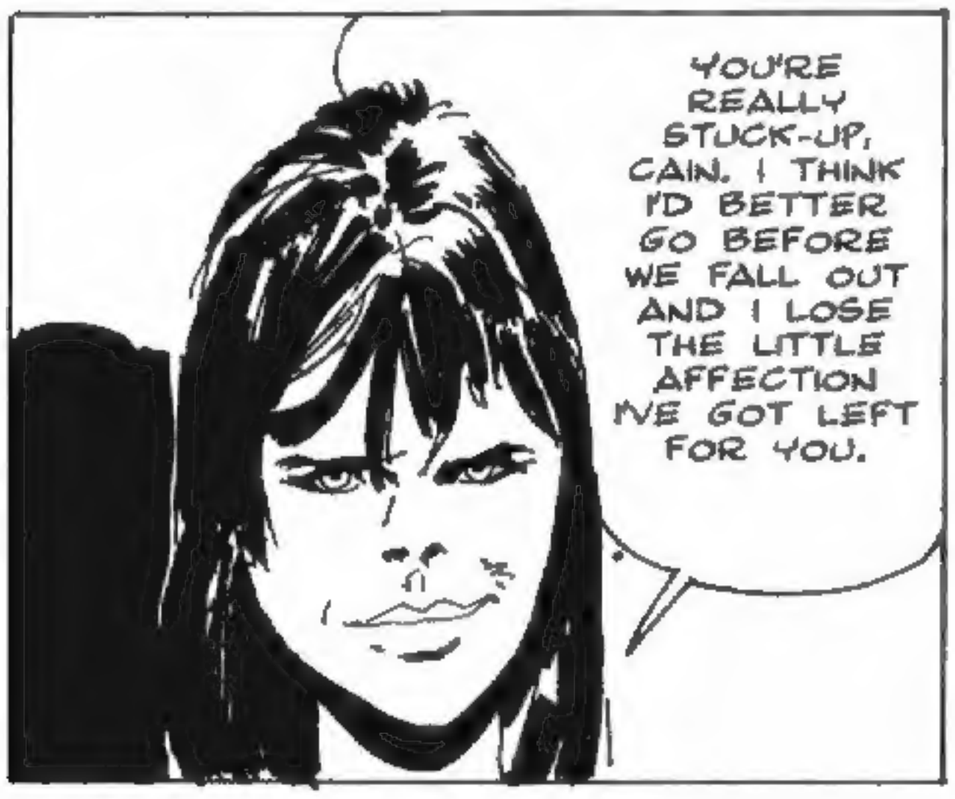
I KNOW WHAT I'M DOING!
YOU'RE BEING VAIN AND STUPID, CAIN!

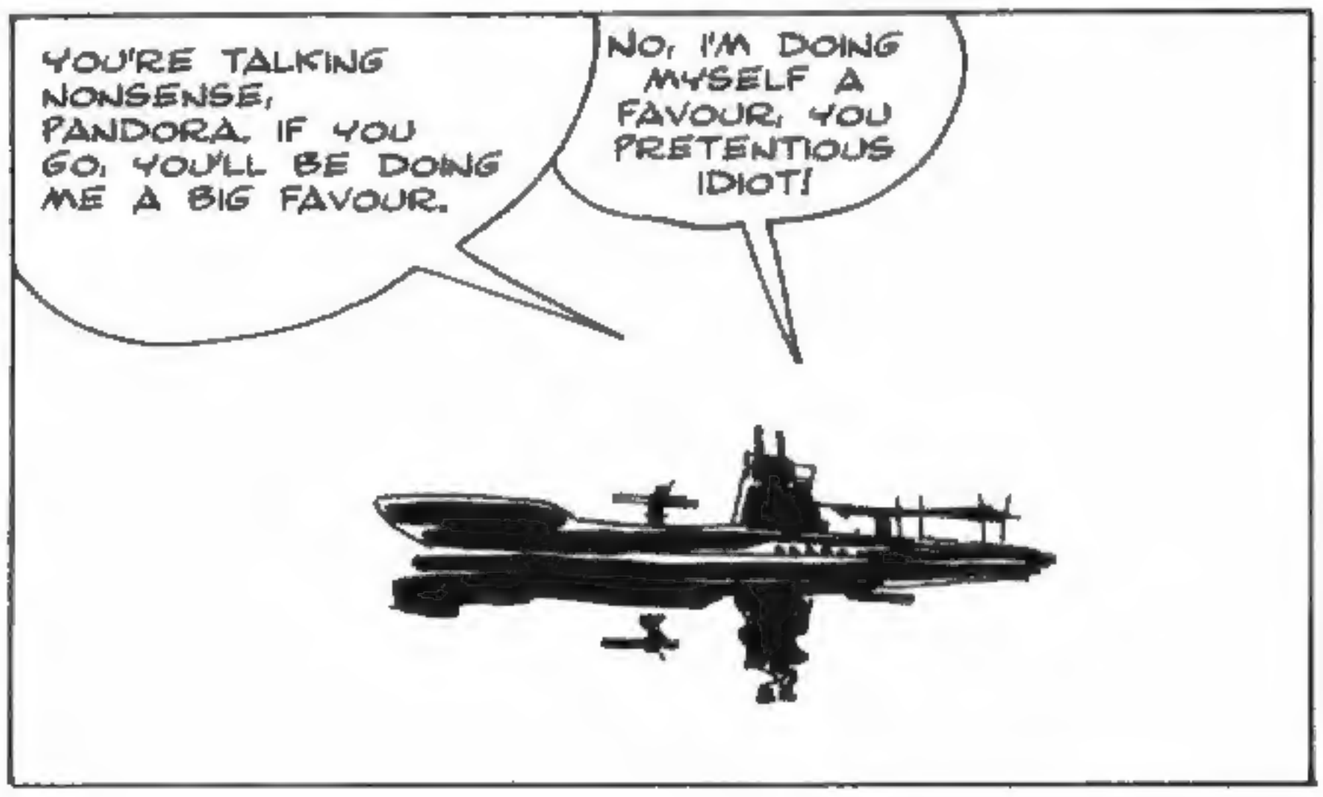
YOU THINK ONLY OF YOURSELF AND YOU DON'T CARE A DAMN IF YOU CAUSE TROUBLE FOR OTHER PEOPLE.
Alla ricerca del TUPEH
OMOO

IF YOU IMAGINE THAT MEN LIKE CORTO MALTESE, RASPUTIN AND SLÜTTER ARE GOING TO BE INFLUENCED BY YOUR NAIVETY...
YOU'VE CHANGED... YOU'RE SCARED...
OMOO
POOR PANDORA, I DON'T RECOGNIZE YOU ANY MORE.

"ALONE, ALONE, ALL, ALL ALONE, ALONE ON A WIDE WIDE SEA! AND NEVER A SAINT TOOK PITY ON MY SOUL IN AGONY."

"THE MANY MEN, SO BEAUTIFUL! AND THEY ALL DEAD DID LIE: AND A THOUSAND THOUSAND SLIMY THINGS LIVED ON; AND SO DID I."
LA BALLATA DEL VECCHIO MARINAIO


YOU'RE REALLY STUCK-UP, CAIN. I THINK I'D BETTER GO BEFORE WE FALL OUT AND I LOSE THE LITTLE AFFECTION I'VE GOT LEFT FOR YOU.


YOU'RE TALKING NONSENSE, PANDORA. IF YOU GO, YOU'LL BE DOING ME A BIG FAVOUR.
NO, I'M DOING MYSELF A FAVOUR, YOU PRETENTIOUS IDIOT!

WELL, MY ROMANTIC PETAL, WHAT DO YOU WANT?

TO TALK TO YOU, CORTO MALTESE!

I WARN YOU AT ONCE THAT I'M IN NO MOOD TO FIGHT WITH YOU.

I'M SORRY I WAS SO IMPULSIVE LAST TIME!

LAST TIME, HEY? SO YOU THINK THERE'LL BE OTHERS?

NO, THAT'S NOT WHAT I MEANT.

SO, WHAT DO YOU WANT THEN?

I WANTED TO MAKE A SUGGESTION, BUT YOU WON'T TAKE ME SERIOUSLY.

I HEAR SO MANY DIFFERENT THINGS, ONE OR TWO MORE WON'T MAKE ANY DIFFERENCE.

YOU COULD CAPTURE THE SUBMARINE AND TAKE ME BACK TO MY FATHER...

I KNEW THAT MILLIONAIRES WERE MAD, BUT I NEVER KNEW WHY. NOW I KNOW. MADNESS RUNS IN THEIR FAMILIES.

THERE MUST BE SOMETHING IN THE INK THEY USE TO PRINT THEIR BANK NOTES.

THE BEST THING FOR YOU AND CAIN TO DO IS TO STAY WITH ME. I BRING GOOD LUCK!

AND YOU THINK THAT YOU'RE GOING TO STAY LUCKY, JUST LIKE THAT?

OF COURSE I DO, MY DEAR. WHEN I WAS YOUNG, I NOTICED THAT I DIDN'T HAVE A LIFE LINE. SO I TOOK MY FATHER'S RAZOR AND SLASH! I CUT A DESTINY TO SUIT ME.

MEANWHILE, ON THE TURRET...

HOW'S LIFE, MR SLÜTTER?

NOT TOO BAD. AND WE'LL BE AT THE ESCONDIDA SOON.

THAT'S RIGHT. SOON! I CAN'T WAIT TO SEE WHAT THE "MONK" IS GOING TO DO.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN 'WHAT THE "MONK" IS GOING TO DO'? IF IT'S THE TWO YOUNGSTERS THAT YOU'RE THINKING ABOUT, THEN THERE'S ABSOLUTELY NOTHING TO BE DONE. I'M TAKING THEM IN HAND MYSELF.

REALLY? AND I SUPPOSE YOU'LL BE ESPECIALLY TAKING THE GIRL IN HAND?

THAT'S ENOUGH, RASPUTIN!

DON'T FORGET WHO YOU'RE TALKING TO.

DON'T MAKE ME LAUGH, SAILOR BOY.

DAMN PIRATE! ANOTHER WORD OUT OF YOU AND I'LL HAVE YOU SLAPPED IN IRONS.

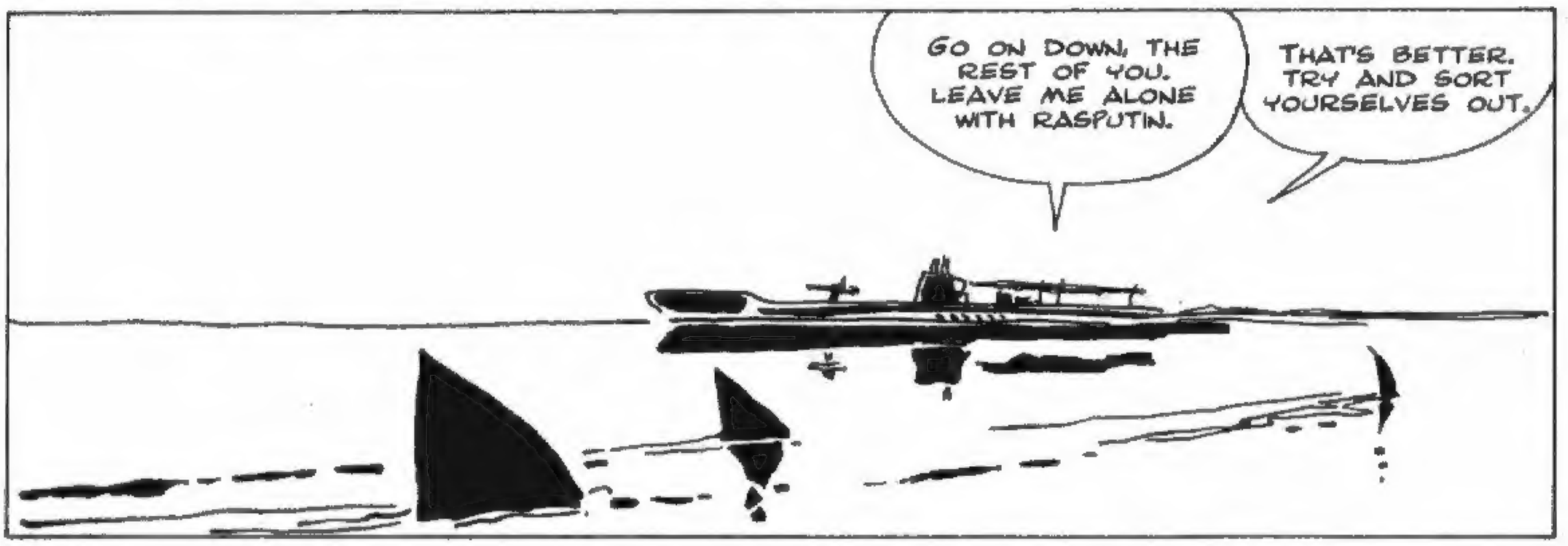
YOU'LL PAY FOR THIS, SLÜTTER, I PROMISE YOU THAT!

YOU WANT TO START AGAIN?
CALM DOWN, MR SLÜTTER.

SOMETHING'S GOING ON UP THERE
LIEUTENANT SLÜTTER'S ARGUING WITH RASPUTIN.

I THINK I KNOW WHY!

SO, WHAT'S GOING ON?
NOTHING NOW, CORTO. IT'S ALL OVER.


GO ON DOWN, THE REST OF YOU. LEAVE ME ALONE WITH RASPUTIN.
THAT'S BETTER. TRY AND SORT YOURSELVES OUT.

SO WHAT'S HAPPENED TO YOU THIS TIME, RAS? I CAN'T LEAVE YOU ALONE FOR A MINUTE WITHOUT YOU GETTING UP TO MISCHIEF.

COME ON, OLD CHAP, GIVE ME YOUR HAND. YOU'LL ONLY HURT YOURSELF AGAIN.
STOP IT, CORTO. YOU'RE GOING TO PAY FOR THIS TOO, YOU DAMN SNOOP!

COMMANDANT, LAND AHOY!

IT'S PROBABLY THE "MONK"'S ISLAND. MR STRIKER, WOULD YOU LOOK TO SEE IF IT'S ON OUR SEA CHARTS?

LET'S SEE... YES, MR SLÜTTER, IT'S THE "ESCONDIDA".

AT LAST, THE "ESCONDIDA", THE MYSTERIOUS "MONK"'S MYSTERIOUS ISLAND, APPEARS IN FRONT OF THE CREW.

ARE THEY RUNNING UP A FLAG?

MR MALTESE, DO YOU KNOW THAT FLAG?

OF COURSE I DO. IT BELONGS TO THE "MONK", THE KING OF THE SEAS.

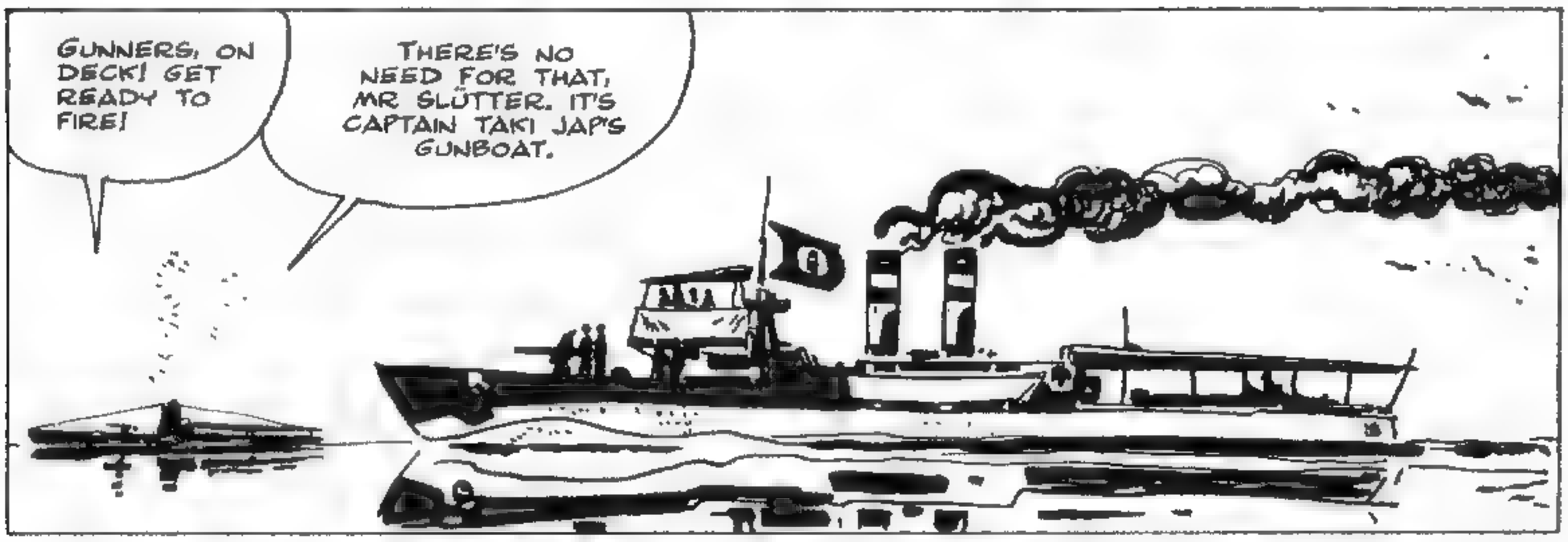
IT MEANS WE'RE SOON GOING TO HAVE COMPANY. YOU SHOULD STOP YOUR ENGINES!

THAT FLAG REMINDS ME OF SOMETHING...

WHERE ARE WE? I MEAN, WHERE EXACTLY IN THE PACIFIC?

AROUND LONGITUDE 168° WEST AND LATITUDE 19° SOUTH.

COMMANDANT, A GUNBOAT IS APPROACHING ON THE PORT SIDE.

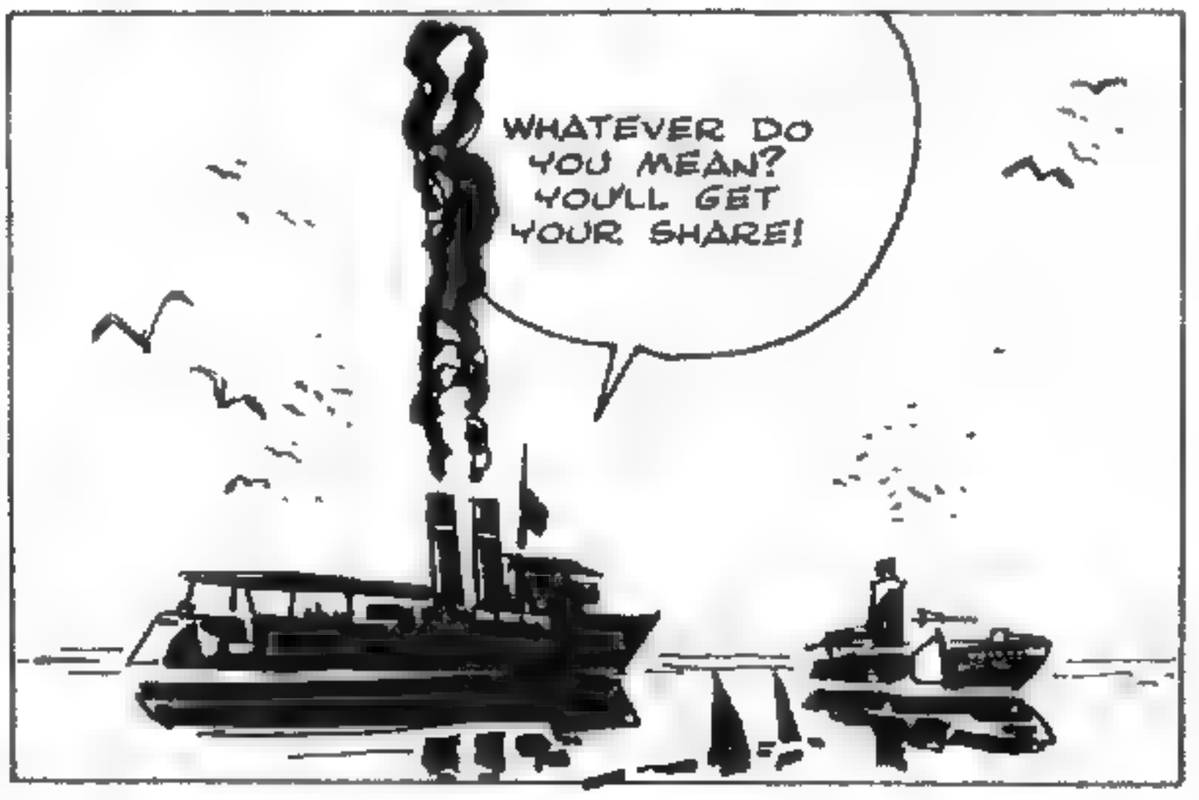

GUNNERS, ON DECK! GET READY TO FIRE!
THERE'S NO NEED FOR THAT, MR SLÜTTER. IT'S CAPTAIN TAKI JAP'S GUNBOAT.

IT IS TERRIBLE THAT I HAVE TO PLAY THIS BLOODY GAME!

THE GUNNERS ARE READY, MR SLÜTTER.
NO NEED FOR THAT, LADS. WE'RE AMONG FRIENDS. OR AT LEAST, SO IT SEEMS.

IS IT THE GERMAN SUBMARINE WHICH THE "MONK" IS EXPECTING?
THAT'S RIGHT. CORTO AND RAS MUST BE WITH THEM.

IT'S A FINE SUB-MARINE. WITH THE GUNBOAT AND THE TWO FRIGATES THE ALLIES' CARGOES WILL BE CHILD'S PLAY. WE'RE GOING TO BE RICH.
YES, THE MONEY WILL GO TO YOU. AND WHAT WILL I GET?


WHATEVER DO YOU MEAN? YOU'LL GET YOUR SHARE!

THE "MONK"'S TORPEDO BOAT HAS ESCORTED SHIP LIEUTENANT SLÜTTER'S SUBMARINE INTO A LAGOON INSIDE "ESCONDIDA" ISLAND.

HEY! THE SUBMARINE THERE! THE NATIVES WILL COME ALONG AND PICK YOU UP IN THEIR PIROGUES. GET READY FOR THEM!

OKAY, CAPTAIN!

SURE ENOUGH, BEFORE LONG, SOME CANOES DRAW UP ALONGSIDE THE GERMAN SUBMARINE.

TE RAATIRA TAPAO PITI? IS EVERYONE THERE? THE LIEUTENANT TOO? QUICK! GET A MOVE ON!

THEY'RE ABOUT TO TAKE US AWAY. WHERE ARE YOU GOING, MR SLÜTTER?

AS SOON AS I'VE HAD A WORD WITH MY OFFICERS, I'LL FOLLOW YOU. WHAT'S THE MATTER, PANDORA?

AMONG ALL THESE PIRATES, YOU'RE THE ONLY RESPECTABLE PERSON HERE. AND NOW YOU'RE DESERTING US!

THAT'S NOT TRUE. I'LL NEVER ABANDON YOU. I WANTED TO TELL YOU...

HO HUM! THE PIROGUE'S ALL SET, PANDORA. CAIN'S ALREADY ABOARD.

BUT I NEVER MEANT TO BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY. CERTAINLY NOT IN THE WAY YOU MEAN.

REALLY? THEN I MUST HAVE BEEN MISTAKEN. COME ON, SLÜTTER, THEY'RE WAITING FOR US ON THE TORPEDO BOAT.

CAIN'S IN THE OTHER PIROGUE. HE STILL LOOKS ANGRY.

CARS ARE WAITING FOR THE YOUNGSTERS ON THE LANDING STAGE.

EI TE AROHA, O TE ATUA. PRETTY, ISN'T SHE?

THAT'S RIGHT, BETTER THAN A POKE IN THE EYE WITH A SHARP STICK.

GET IN!

THERE'S SOMETHING WRONG WITH THE CAR. I'M GOING TO HAVE TO FIX IT. I'LL TAKE YOU TO THE "MONK"'S HOUSE. BUT HE WON'T BE THERE FOR TWO DAYS.

STILL ANGRY, CAIN?

NO, I'M NOT AND I NEVER HAVE BEEN...

IT WASN'T WORTH IT.

SO MUCH THE BETTER!

I'LL BE CURIOUS TO SEE THIS FAMOUS "MONK"!

BEFORE LONG, THE CAR STOPS OUTSIDE A BUNGALOW, ON A HILL.

HERE WE ARE. THIS IS THE "MONK"'S HOUSE.

IT'S RATHER NICE HERE.

YES, NOT BAD. AT LEAST WE'RE NOT STILL COOPED UP IN THAT SUBMARINE.

MAKE YOURSELVES AT HOME. THE "MONK" WILL BE BACK SOON.

YOU CAN TAKE THE MAIN BEDROOM. IT OVERLOOKS THE TERRACE.

I HOPE YOU'LL FEEL AT HOME HERE. CALL ME IF YOU NEED ANYTHING. I'M CALLED "THE FAMOUS SBRINDOLIN." HASTA LUEGO.*

* GOODBYE.

HOW STRANGE. EVERYONE'S BEING VERY POLITE TO US. I'M STARTING TO FEEL MORE INTRIGUED THAN FRIGHTENED. WHO KNOWS WHAT THE "MONK" IS LIKE?

FROM WHAT I'VE HEARD, HE MUST BE 200 YEARS OLD.

THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE!

OF COURSE IT IS. BUT ALL THE NATIVES TALK LIKE HE HAS EXISTED FOR EVER.

AND YOU, PANDORA. YOU LOOK PUT OUT.

NO, I'M JUST A BIT ANNOYED. WE'RE MILES FROM HOME, OUR PARENTS MUST THINK WE'RE DEAD, WE DON'T EVEN KNOW HOW IT'S ALL GOING TO END... AND YOU GO OUT OF YOUR WAY TO BE DISAGREEABLE.

I DON'T UNDERSTAND YOU, CAIN. SOMETIMES YOU BEHAVE AS IF LIFE DIDN'T INTEREST YOU ANY MORE.

WHAT IF WE TRIED TO MAKE FRIENDS WITH CORTO MALTESE? HE MUST SURELY HAVE HIS GOOD SIDE!

AFTER ALL, YOU HAVE TO ADMIT THAT, UP TILL NOW, HE HAS ALWAYS HELPED US OUT... DON'T YOU THINK SO, CAIN?

CAIN? I'M TALKING TO YOU! CAIN... ?

AND NOW YOU'RE TALKING TO YOURSELF. I'VE JUST SEEN HIM IN THE COURTYARD.

I SUPPOSE YOU WERE GIVING HIM ONE OF YOUR SERMONS. SHALL I TAKE YOU FOR A DRIVE? WOULD YOU LIKE THAT, MY ROMANTIC PETAL?

I WAS TALKING TO HIM AND DIDN'T NOTICE THAT HE'D GONE OUT. WHERE DO YOU WANT TO TAKE ME?

OH YES!

FOR A NICE TRIP ROUND THE ISLAND. IT'LL HELP US PASS THE TIME WHILE WE'RE WAITING FOR THE "MONK". ARE YOU COMING?

WHO IS THE "MONK"? CAIN SAYS THAT THE NATIVES THINK HE'S 200 YEARS OLD.

WHO KNOWS? 200 YEARS? EVEN I BELIEVE IT SOMETIMES, BUT IT ISN'T TRUE, IT'S A STORY, WHICH HE MAY TELL YOU SOMETIME...

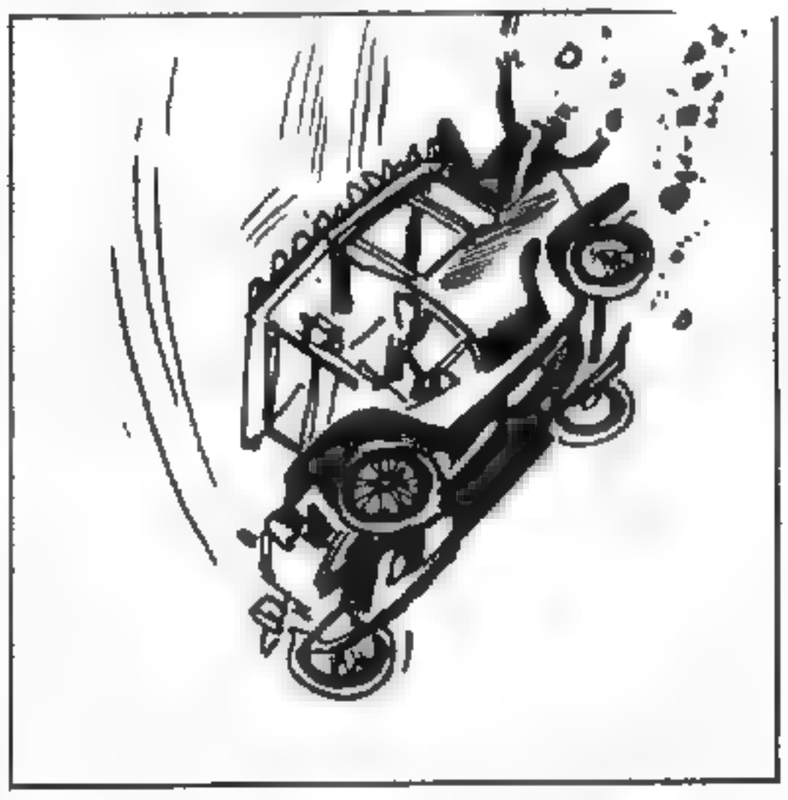
I DON'T THINK YOU'RE AS WICKED AS YOU PRETEND TO BE.

I'M NOT? GOOD GRIEF! AFTER ALL THE EFFORTS I'VE BEEN MAKING! HOW DIS-APPOINTING!

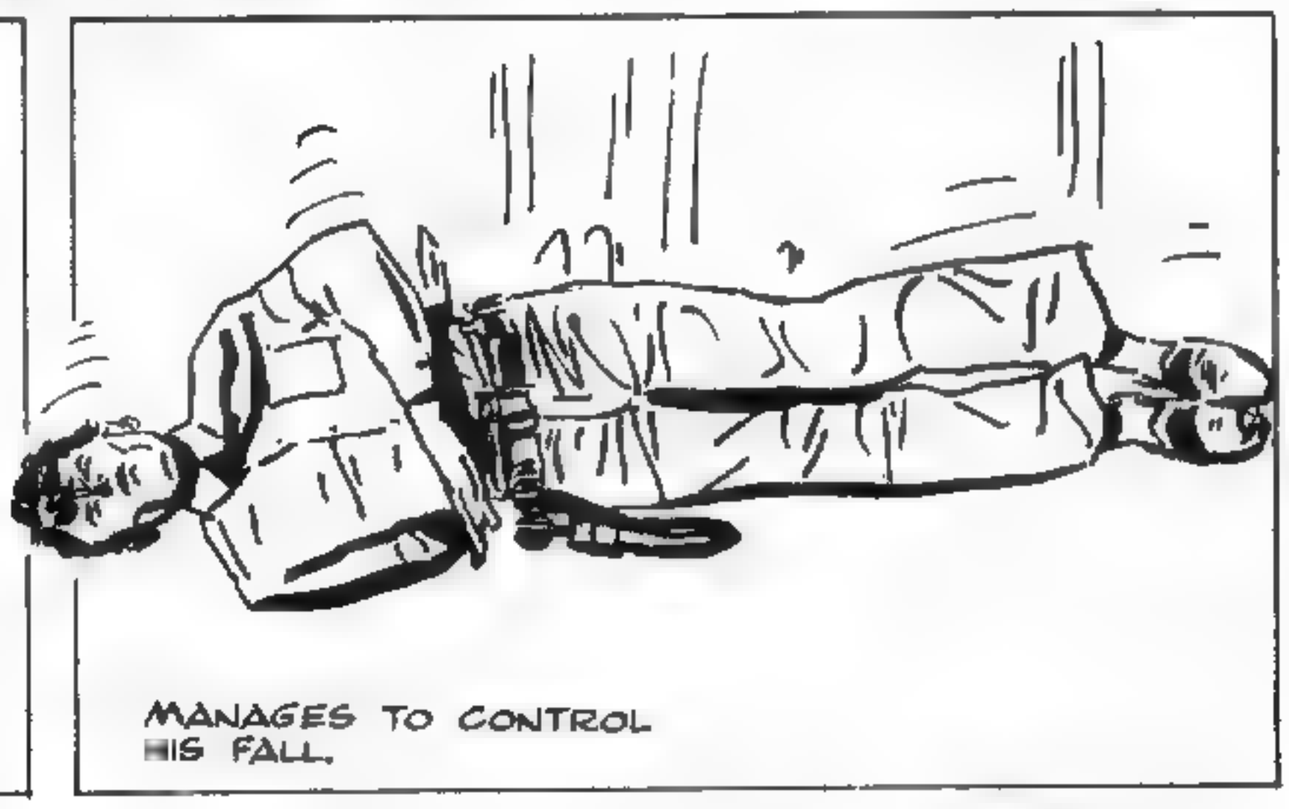
CRACK!

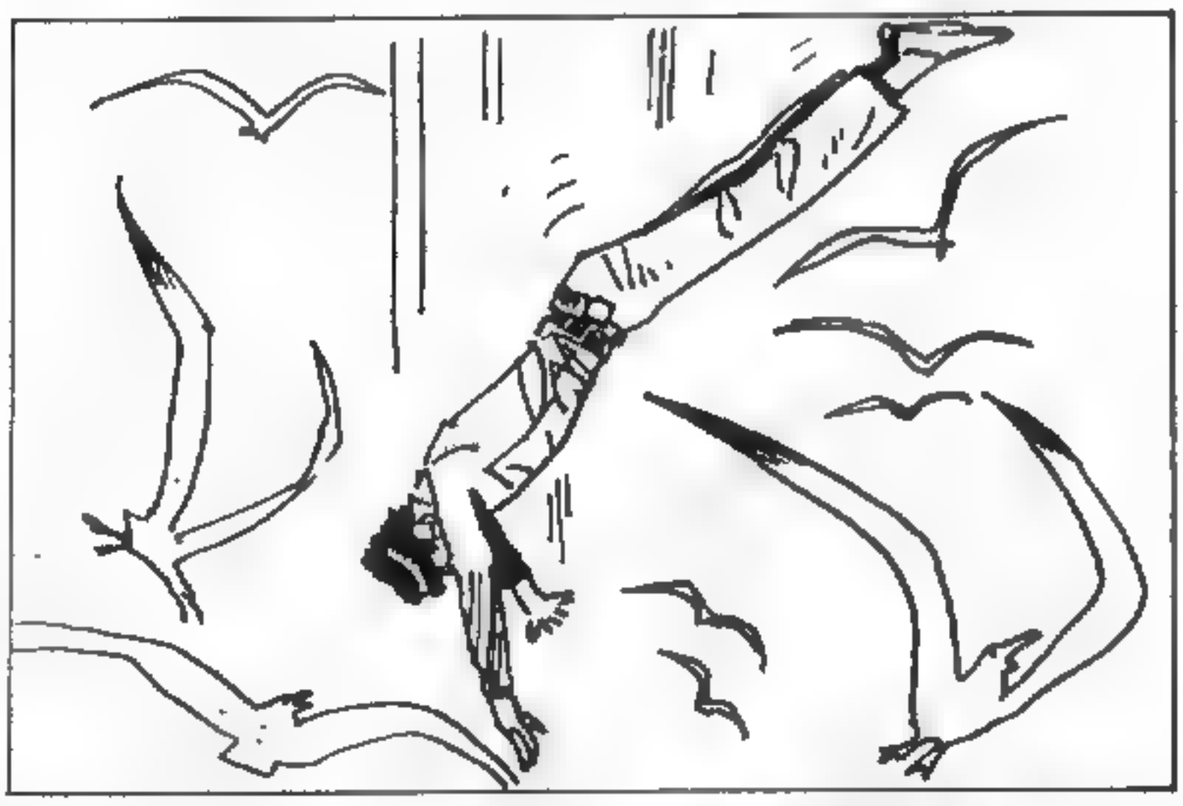
SWISSSSH!

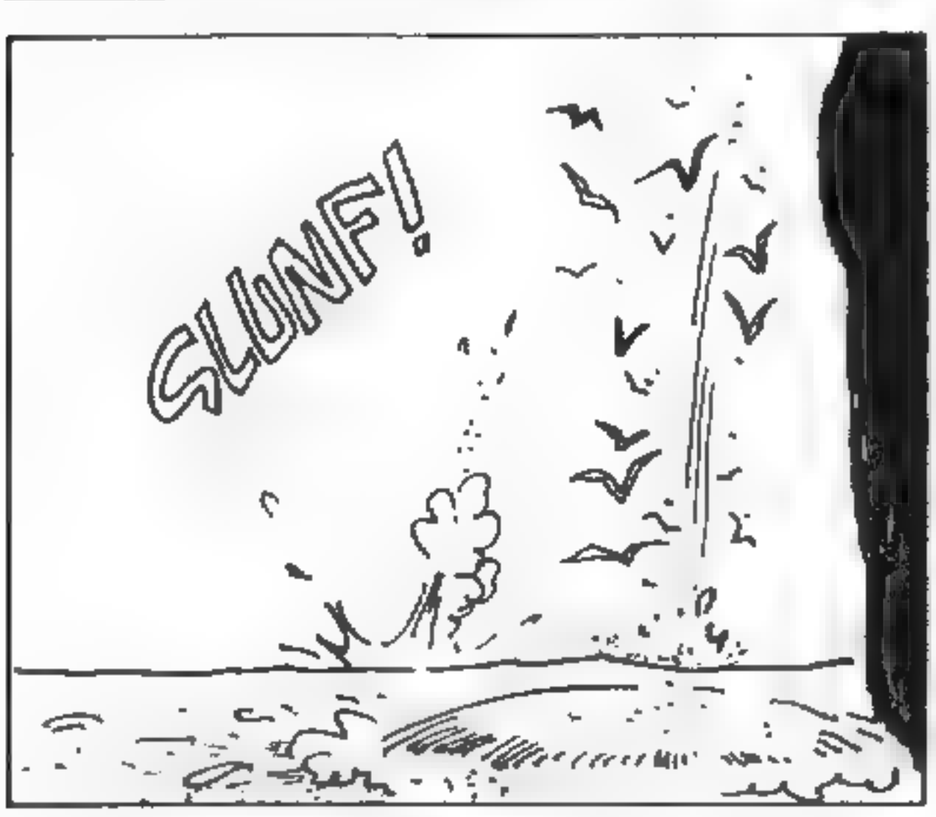
SCRACHHHHH!
THE DRIVER'S SUDDEN TURN OF THE STEERING WHEEL DOESN'T STOP THE CAR FROM FALLING...

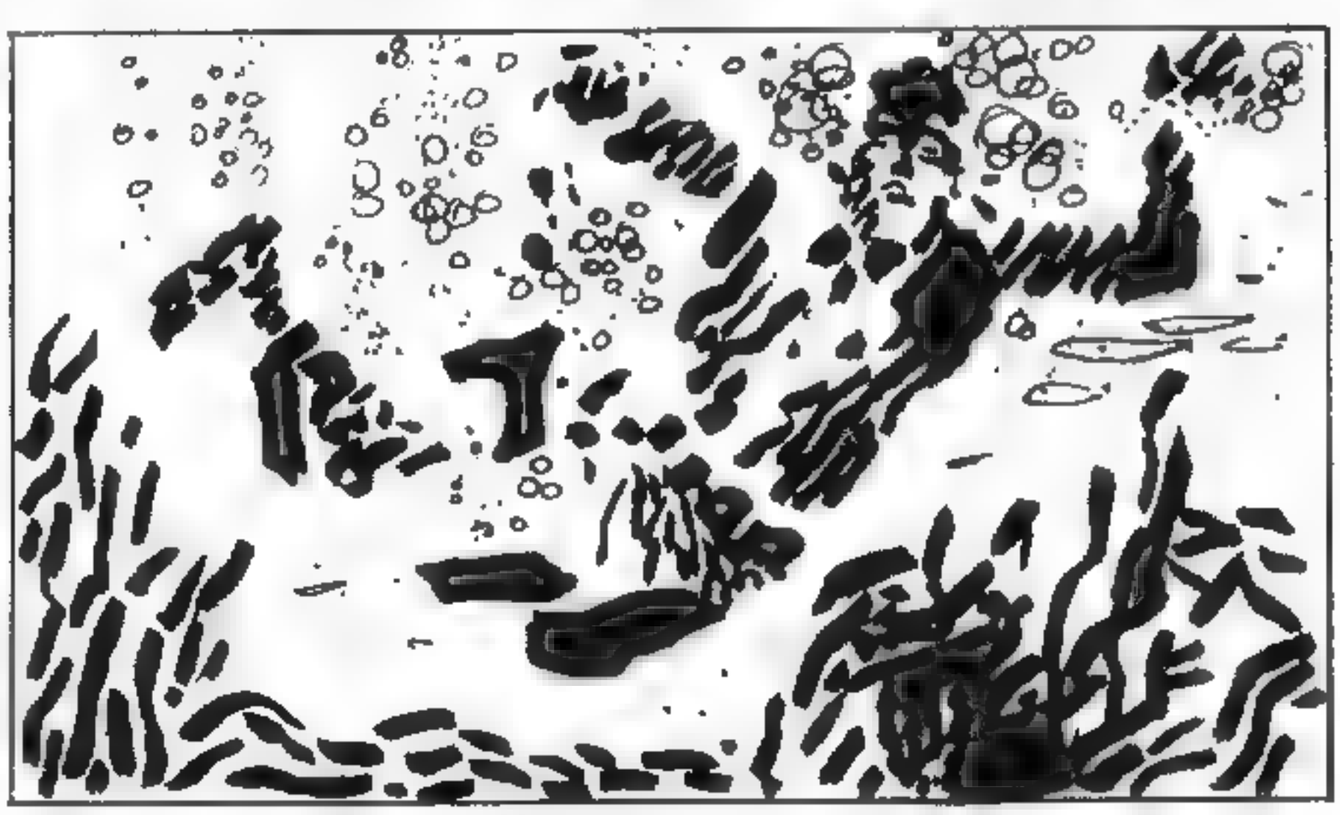


WITH LIGHTNING SPEED, CORTO MALTESE...


MANAGES TO CONTROL HIS FALL.




SLUNF!



JESUS, I'M STILL IN ONE PIECE!
THERE'S THE CAR. THE DRIVER WAS KILLED BEFORE THE FALL. I'LL JUST HAVE TO SAVE PANDORA. IF SHE'S STILL ALIVE!

PHEW! I WAS AT BURSTING POINT!

BEFORE LONG, ON THE ROCKS..
BRRRT!
O BRRRT!
BY NEPTUNE, SHE'S ALIVE!

SLAP!
SLAP!
WHAT THE!?!

MY GOD, AN OCTOPUS!

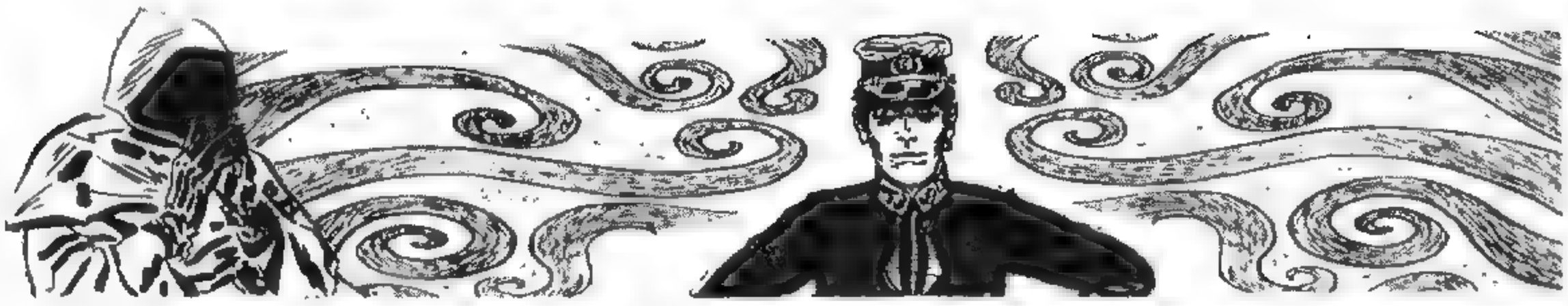
WHERE'S MY KNIFE? WHERE'S MY KNIFE?

WHERE DID THAT CRASH WE HEARD COME FROM?

IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN A LUMP OF ROCK FALLING INTO THE SEA.

E PARAU MAU TAHI FEE.

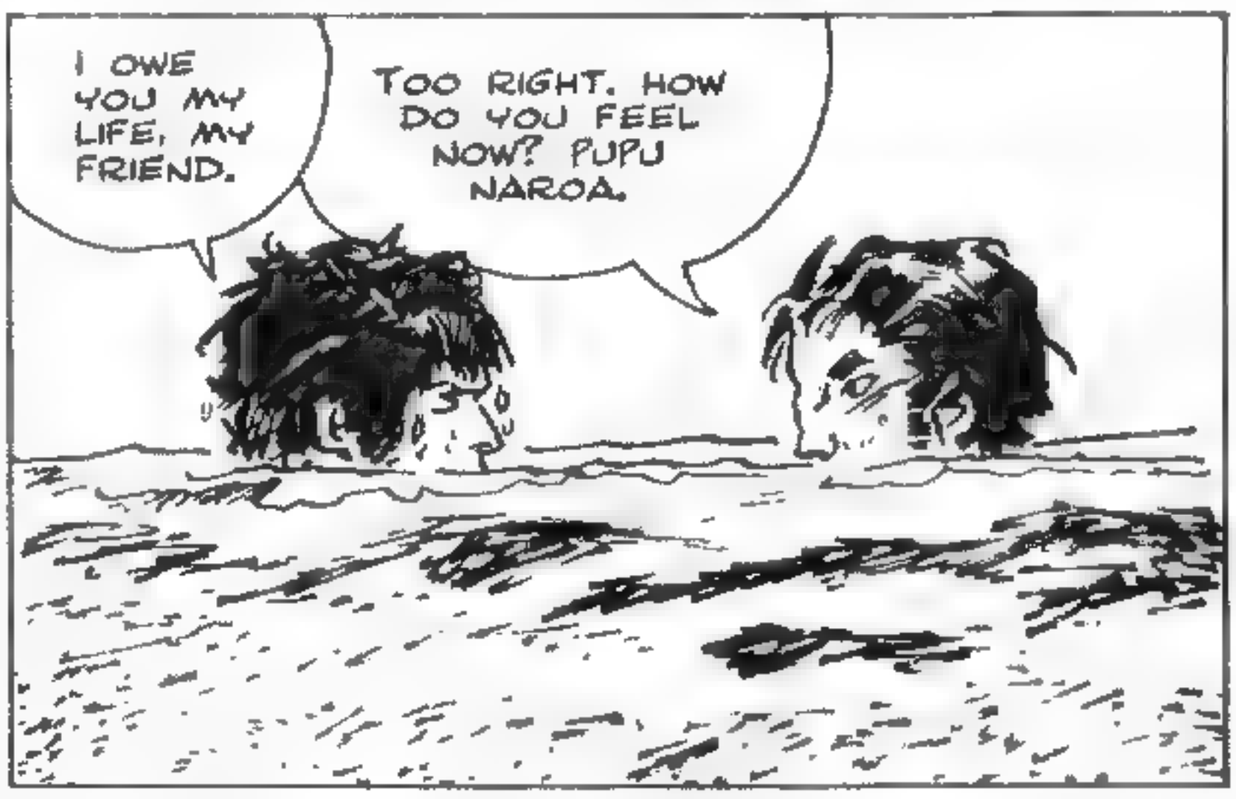
YES, YES... POULPETON, POULPETON.



WELL, WELL, WELL. HE'S GOT HIM!

CORTO MALTESE'S FOOT HAS BECOME LODGED IN A CLAM.

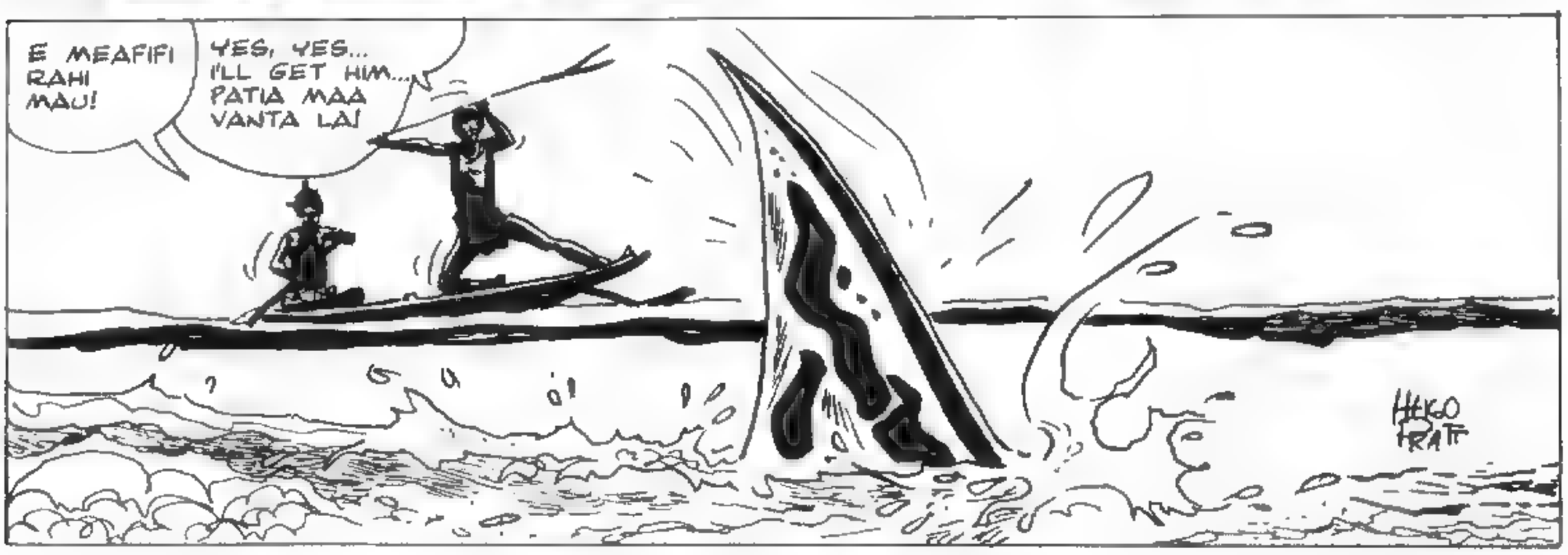
AIR! AIR!

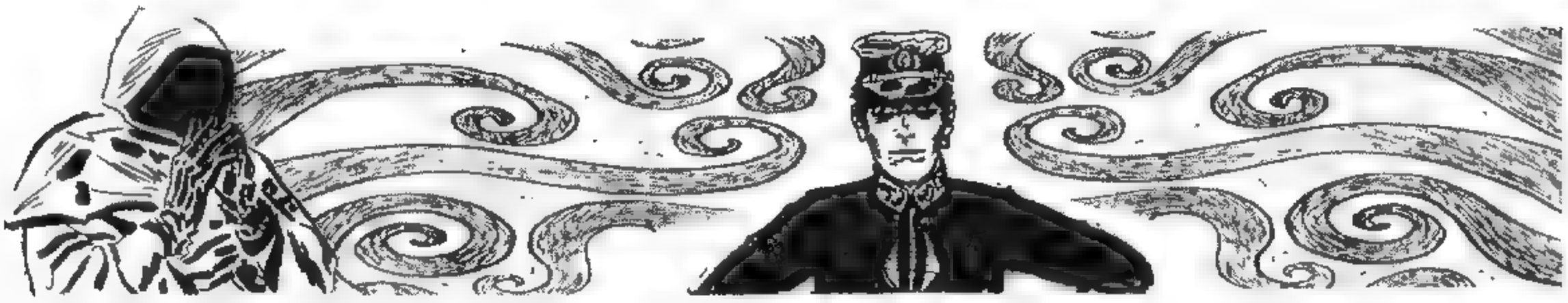

I OWE YOU MY LIFE, MY FRIEND.
TOO RIGHT. HOW DO YOU FEEL NOW? PUPU NAROA.

WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?
TAATOA... MAO.... MAO... HEAVEN HELP US. A SHARK!
HUGO PRATT

THAT SHARK'S CIRCLING US. IT'S SOON GOING TO ATTACK.
LET'S SEPARATE. YOU GO YOUR WAY AND I'LL GO MINE. THAT MIGHT CONFUSE IT.

THAT'S NOT A BAD IDEA. LET'S GO...
OKAY!


E MEAFIFI RAHI MAU!
YES, YES... I'LL GET HIM... PATIA MAA VANTA LA!
HERGÉ TRATT



AJE TE NEHE NEHE E! GO AWAY! GO AWAY!

WELL DONE, LADS! GOOD SHOT!

HE'S GONE DOWN LIKE A STONE.
CORTO MALTESE! EVERYTHING'S ALL RIGHT!
YES!

HOW DO YOU FEEL?
ALL RIGHT, NOW. THANK YOU, OLD CHAP.

YOU DIDN'T SEE WHO FIRED THE SHOT FROM THE HILL BY ANY CHANCE?
NO, WE DIDN'T HAVE TIME. I DIVED AT ONCE TO HELP YOU.

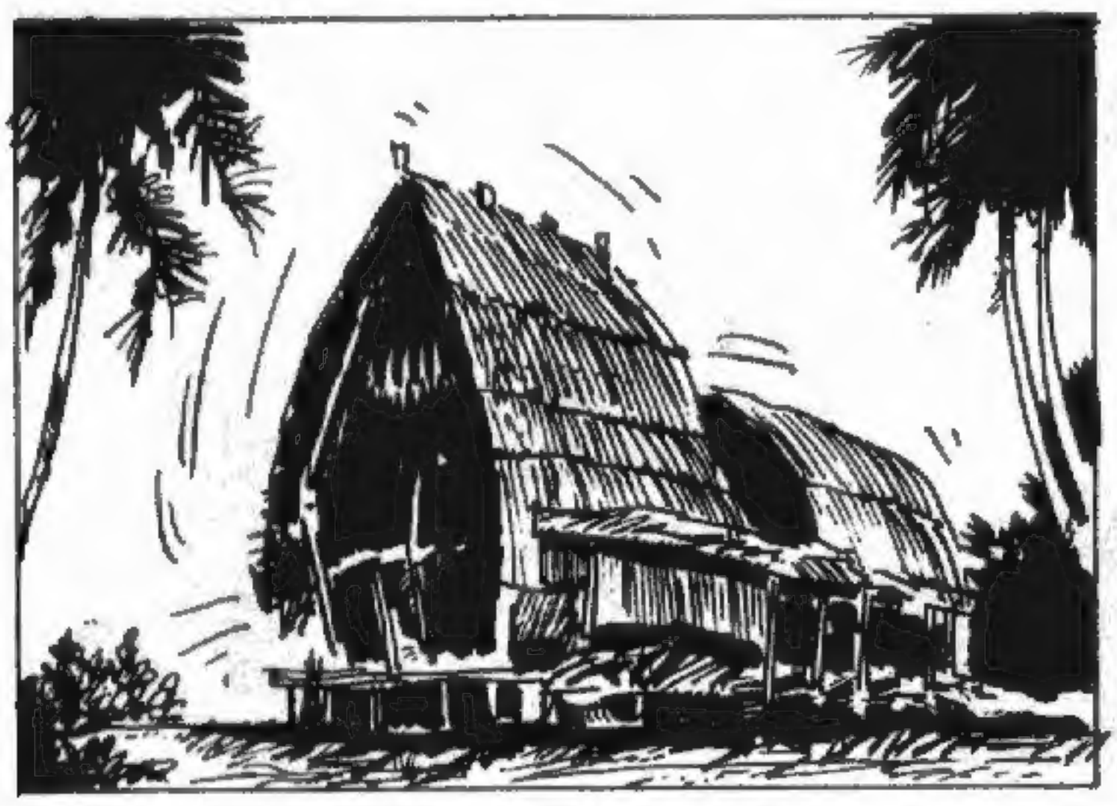
ALL RIGHT... BUT I THINK I KNOW WHO IT WAS. QUICKLY, TAKE ME TO LAND!

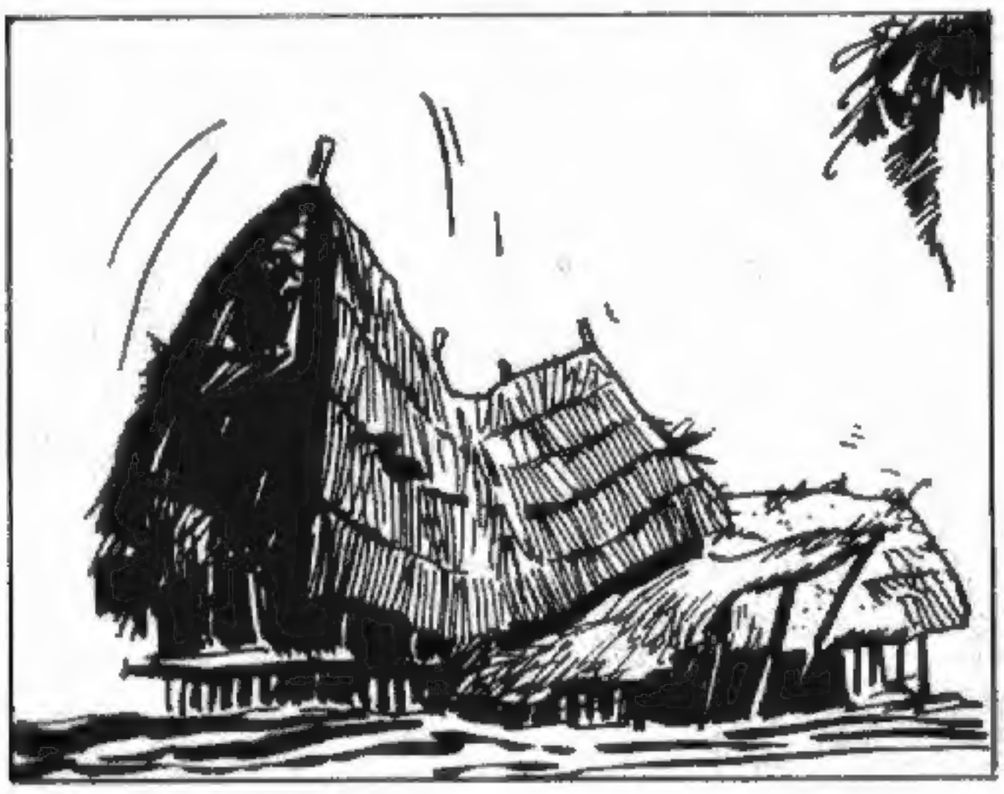
IN A FURY, CORTO MALTESE PLUNGES INTO THE JUNGLE...
I'M SURE IT WAS HIM!

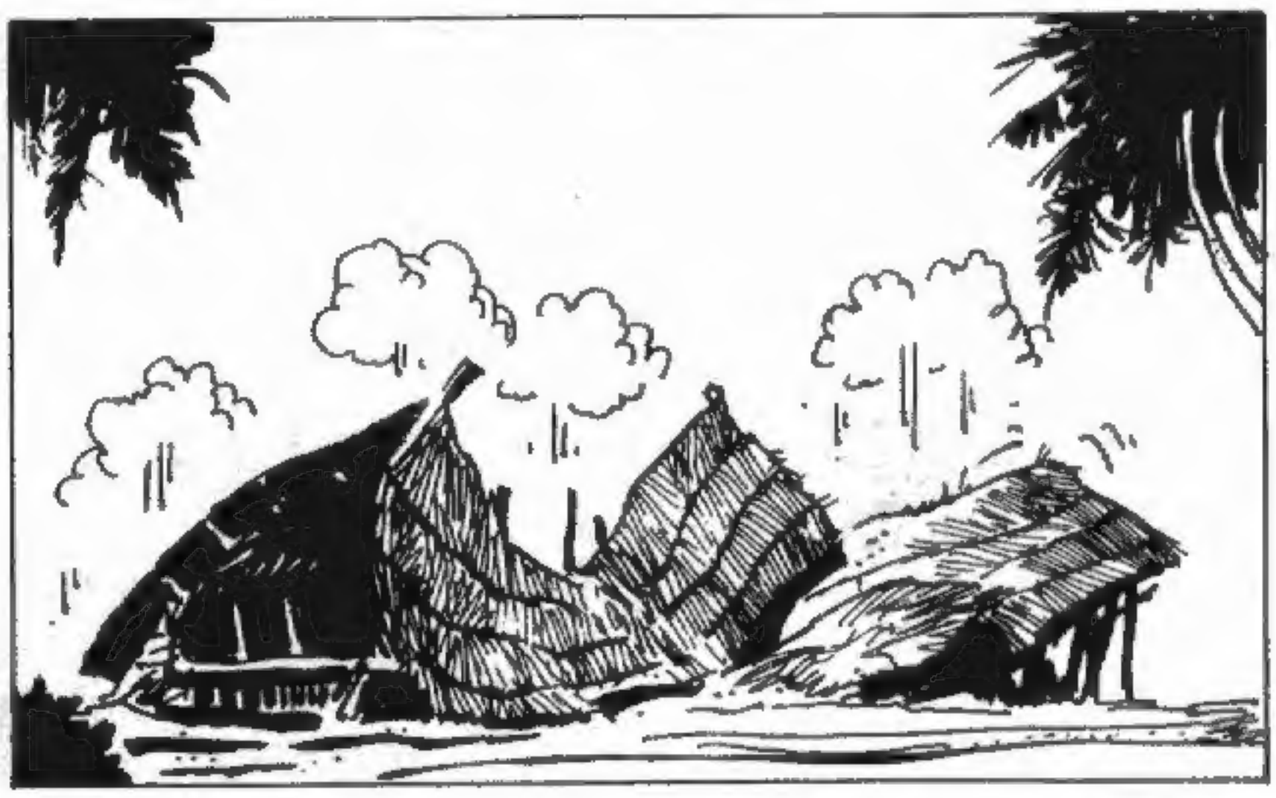
I WOULD NEVER HAVE THOUGHT HIM CAPABLE OF GOING SO FAR.

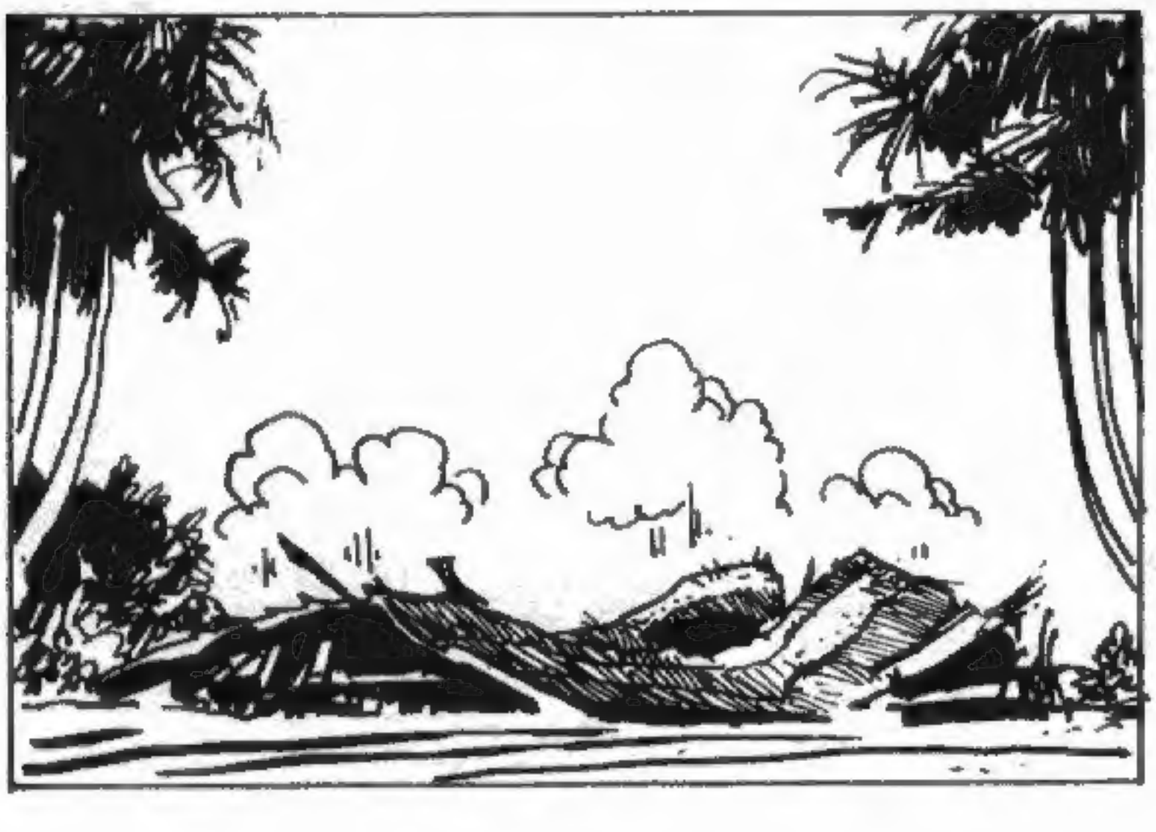
INSIDE THE HUT...

MY DEAR CHAP, HAVE YOU COME TO KEEP ME COMPANY?









YOU STILL HAVEN'T PROVED ANYTHING!

HAVE YOU GONE CRAZY? WHY HAVE YOU DEMOLISHED MY HUT?
DON'T BE A HYPOCRITE. YOU KNOW FULL WELL!

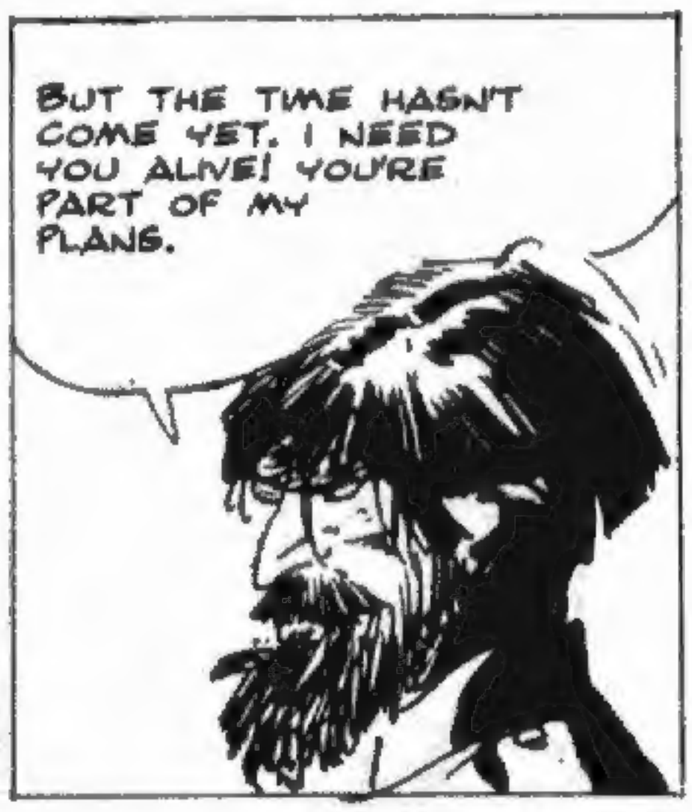
WHEN I CAME IN, YOU WERE CLEANING YOUR GUN. WHY? TO GET RID OF THE TRACES?
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? I HAVEN'T EVEN BEEN OUT. WHAT'S ALL THIS NONSENSE?

YOU THOUGHT YOU'D KILLED ME, YOU BASTARD. BUT SOONER OR LATER, I'M GOING TO KILL YOU.
ARE YOU JOKING, CORTO? I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT.

YOU'RE THE BIGGEST LIAR I'VE EVER MET. YOU WERE CLEANING YOUR GUN. YOU KILLED THE NATIVE WHO WAS DRIVING THE CAR AND...
CORTO, I HAVEN'T KILLED ANYONE THIS MORN- NG. NOT YET, ANYWAY. BUT I MIGHT JUST START WITH YOU. I DIDN'T DO IT!

SO WHY WERE YOU CLEANING YOUR GUN, THEN? QUITE A COIN- CIDENCE, HUH?

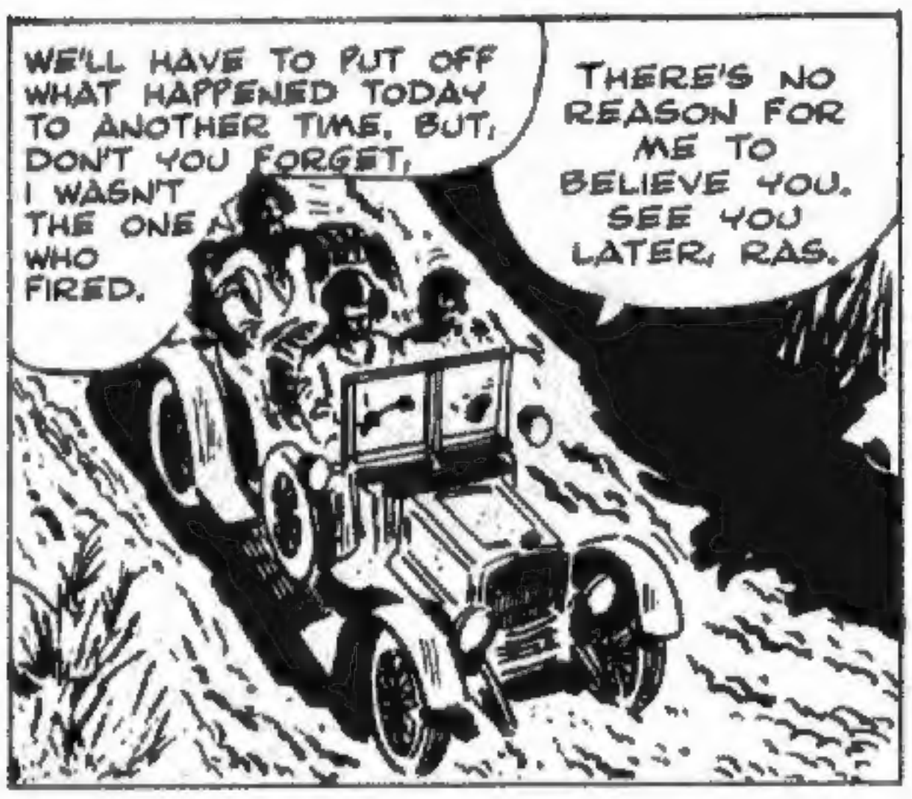
THINK WHATEVER YOU LIKE. BUT THE DAY I KILL YOU, IT WON'T BE WITH A GUN, BUT WITH MY BARE HANDS...


BUT THE TIME HASN'T COME YET. I NEED YOU ALIVE! YOU'RE PART OF MY PLANS.

COME QUICKLY! THE "MONK" HAS ARRIVED!

THE BELL OF ESCONDIDA'S "PARLIAMENT HOUSE" IS SUMMONING A GATHERING FOR THE "MONK"'S ARRIVAL.

DING! DING! DING!


WE'LL HAVE TO PUT OFF WHAT HAPPENED TODAY TO ANOTHER TIME. BUT, DON'T YOU FORGET, I WASN'T THE ONE A WHO FIRED.
THERE'S NO REASON FOR ME TO BELIEVE YOU. SEE YOU LATER, RAS.

IF IT WASN'T RASPUTIN, THEN WHO? SHIP'S LIEUTENANT SLÜTTER? NO! HE WAS ABOARD SHIP. IT CAN'T HAVE BEEN CRANIO. PANDORA WAS WITH ME. CAIN. CAIN?!

To be continued

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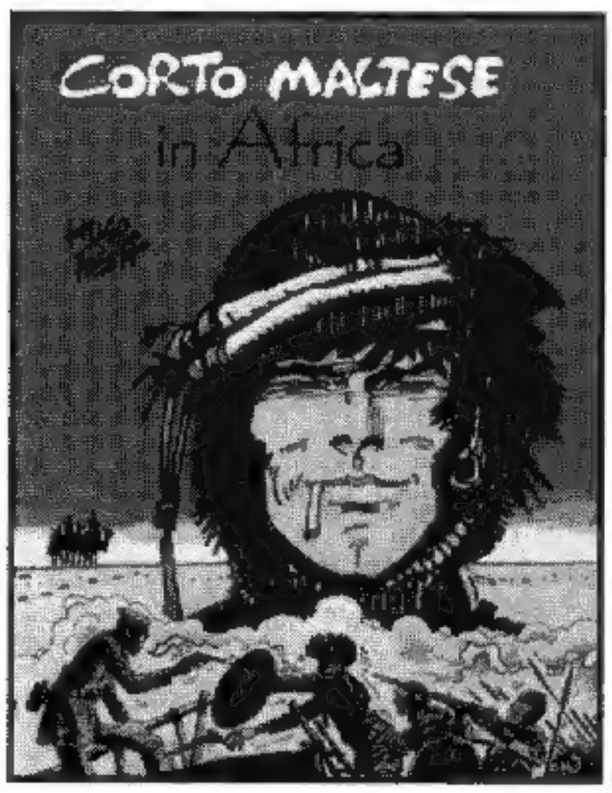

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